



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

July 17, 2000

### **H.R. 4404**

**A bill to permit the payment of medical expenses incurred by the United States Park Police in the performance of duty to be made directly by the National Park Service, to allow for waiver and indemnification in mutual law enforcement agreements between the National Park Service and a state or political subdivision when required by state law, and for other purposes**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on June 28, 2000*

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 4404 would have no significant impact on federal spending. Because the legislation could help the National Park Service (NPS) to pay certain employee expenses more efficiently, federal outlays could occur more rapidly than they have in the recent past. Any such effect would be temporary (in the first year or two following enactment), minor (less than \$100,000 in total), and subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Also, as a result of efficiencies resulting from this legislation, the NPS could realize small net savings in annual employment-related expenses in the long run, but CBO estimates that any such changes would be negligible.

H.R. 4404 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

Section 1 would amend Title IV of the District of Columbia Code to state that the NPS will pay directly to vendors all eligible medical bills submitted for members of the United States Park Police (USPP) who are injured or become ill while performing their duties. This section also would authorize the appropriation of whatever amounts are necessary to reimburse the NPS for such payments. Title IV currently requires the District of Columbia to make medical payments directly to the vendors—for the USPP, for certain members of the U.S. Secret Service, and for members of its own Metropolitan Police and Fire Departments. The title also authorizes appropriations from the U.S. Treasury of whatever amounts are needed to reimburse the District monthly for all medical bills that it has paid for federal employees.

Implementing section 1 would neither alter the financial obligations of the NPS to any USPP member nor affect the dollar amount owed by that agency for medical expenses of the USPP. The NPS would continue to pay the amounts—an average of about \$400,000 annually—but to different people, and possibly more quickly. CBO estimates that, in general, the NPS would be able to process claims for medical expenses more rapidly (and, in the long run, possibly more cheaply) under this legislation because it would eliminate the District as a third party in each transaction. This change would reduce the number of time-consuming steps in the payment process and help to expedite the payment of any backlog that the District might have remaining at the time of enactment. CBO estimates that the effect of paying off outstanding bills and implementing a more timely payment schedule would result in a one-time outlay increase of less than \$100,000 (assuming that appropriated funds are available for this purpose).

Section 2 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to waive all claims against state or local governments that enter into mutual law enforcement agreements with the NPS. Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, the NPS also would be authorized to indemnify these governments against third-party claims that may arise from actions taken by state or local police when assisting the agency.

According to information provided by the NPS, the agency has, since the early 1990s, executed agreements that contain mutual waivers and indemnification clauses with local law enforcement agencies in at least two states, Virginia and Maryland. Because section 2 would codify a practice that has already been in use by the NPS for several years, CBO expects that enacting this provision would have no effect on the federal budget.

The CBO staff contact is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.